



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE THEORY OF GOOD AND EVIL. A Treatise on Moral Philosophy. By Hastings Rashdall, D. Litt., D. C. L., Fellow and Tutor of New College, Oxford. Two Volumes. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907.

These volumes are another proof that Oxford University still holds its own in the front of the philosophical criticism of moral and social life. The subjects with which they deal, "The Moral Criterion," "The Individual and the Society," "Man and the Universe," afford opportunity for the discussion of nearly all the great subjects of theoretic or practical interest connected with it. It is needless to say that they are treated by Dr. Rashdall with a breadth of sympathy, a distinction of style and a lucidity of illustration which are quite uncommon. More particularly the illustrations gain in value from the writer's wide historical and theological knowledge enabling him to speak with authority on subjects which ethical writers commonly avoid or touch with a hesitating hand. But the chief value of his book, from a general point of view, is the concreteness and wise balance of judgment with which particular topics are handled, of which the treatment of Socialism (I, p. 274), the State and Morality (I, p. 299), the Intellectual and Artistic Life (II, p. 91), Athleticism (II, p. 191), Asceticism (II, p. 70), the Choice of a Profession, and the Doctrine of Vocation, and Internal Circumstances (II, p. 94), are merely a few out of many. The point of view from which the author approaches these subjects is sufficiently indicated in the dedication in which the names of T. H. Green and Henry Sidgwick are coupled together. Dr. Rashdall is not an Intuitionist, still less a Hedonist. Yet he holds that the Intuitionism and the Hedonism which are represented in Sidgwick's philosophy are not without their relative justification: the first in the immediate judgments wherein consciousness makes known to us the relative value of particular elements in the good; the second in the recognition of pleasure, if not as *the* good, yet as a good existing alongside of and comparable to the other elements, of which morality or the good will, intellectual and æsthetic culture are the chief. With Green, on the other hand, he shares the idealistic theory of knowledge derived from Kant, only parting from him (or perhaps he would prefer to say, from the disciples of Green who have, in his view, turned the master's suggestive mysticism into dogmatism) in asserting the independ-

ent value of pleasure and in dissociating himself altogether from Green's ethical formula of self-realization.

It is in these latter criticisms of "established idealism" that the storm-centre, if so violent a word can be applied to so gentle and urbane a writer, is likely to be found. Before venturing within its area I wish to acknowledge my personal debt for additional light on particular doctrines which I have myself, perhaps, elsewhere expressed ambiguously. The doctrine of desire in the first volume is stated with admirable lucidity so as to bring out the fallacy of the doctrine that the object of desire must necessarily be "a state of consciousness" of the subject. The distinction between the satisfaction and the fulfilment of desire so well brought out in some recent articles in this JOURNAL by Dr. Wodehouse has put this beyond all doubt and agrees with the view here set forth. The passage also (II, 93) which deals with the more serious difficulty of Bradley's antinomy between self-assertion and self-sacrifice and its admirably stated conclusion that "the collisions between self-realization and self-assertion (sacrifice?) are difficulties created for ethics by Mr. Bradley's particular system of metaphysics—not difficulties created for metaphysics by ethics," are likely to meet with assent from more conservative Idealists. Although his main contention as to the place of pleasure in the good is open, I believe, to fatal objection, there is much in what he says as to the possibility of valuing an object for its pleasure-giving quality, *i. e.*, of desiring pleasure, to the truth of which nothing but a "thesis" can blind the reader. Yet the philosophical framework of Dr. Rashdall's work as a whole seems to me so inconsistent with the "thorough-going idealism" with which he desires, I think rightly, to identify himself, that at the risk of apparent ingratitude I have given the major part of this review to negative criticism.

I have already mentioned the three points in which Dr. Rashdall departs from current idealistic ethics. To take them in order: 1. There is of course a sense in which intuitionism may be said to be a part of all idealistic theory. The "ideal" it must hold is prescribed by the characteristic features of human nature. The logical ideal is of the essence of intelligence; the moral ideal of the will. The harmonious albeit relative and human whole for which each stands is spiritually, *i. e.*, intuitively discerned. This means that particular things or functions that are in essential relation to this whole, come to us with a particular tang,

whether as "fine" or as "good," different from that of others and each from the other. But this is not, I think, all that Dr. Rashdall means. His doctrine, as I understand it, is intended to deny any real analogy between the ideal of the theoretic and the ideal of the moral reason, seeing that in the latter we start from isolated judgments of the value of particular elements which in their mere union, apart from inner apprehended connection, make up "the whole." "If these elements," he says, "were not each by itself the object of a judgment of value there could be no judgment of value of the whole." It is true he immediately corrects this with the note, "Of course we could form no judgment upon the worth of an act or state of mind without some general knowledge of its relation to life as a whole." But this is only an instance of a certain elusiveness in his philosophic statements which makes it often difficult to say what his ultimate view in reality is. In the present case these two propositions seem to me to conceal two perfectly different theories of the nature of the "moral reason" to which appeal is made throughout these volumes—the one compatible, the other incompatible with a thoroughgoing idealism.

2. Coming to the second point, the place of pleasure, the critic is here somewhat at a loss, owing to the confessed absence of any attempt to define pleasure and displeasure. He seems bound to assume that so well-informed a psychologist as Dr. Rashdall has carefully considered the most widely accepted view of pleasure as the sign or measure of value to a conscious organism differing in degree according to certain well-recognized though still obscure conditions and in "quality" according to the intimacy of the connection between the function and the "nature" of the organism as a whole. This view of pleasure and *mutatis mutandis* of its opposite is in harmony with the theory which refuses to admit it as an element in the content of good itself. On the other hand, it seems quite incompatible with a theory which seeks to interpret it as "a part" of the good. Yet there is no adequate criticism nor any attempt to substitute a better. The evidence for the view in the text seems to consist in such empirical facts as our judgment that a given good, whether an act of charity or a dinner, is *better, ceteris paribus*, if it gives pleasure to those concerned, *worse* if it fails to, and what apparently the author receives as an intuitive revelation of the moral reason, that, *ceteris paribus*, or in the absence of any higher good to be realized,

the duty of increasing the sum total of pleasure and diminishing the sum total of pain remains. To this he adds, in the disquieting chapters on the summability and commensurability of pleasures not only with one another, but with "higher" forms of good, the suggestion that there are occasions on which "a little intellectual or æsthetic good has to be sacrificed for a much larger quantity of pleasure or freedom from pain." It would not be fair to make Dr. Rashdall responsible for the maxim that the practical man would be likely to deduce from the first of these doctrines: "When in doubt play pleasure." Nor, seeing that he presumably rejects the common doctrine of pleasure, would it be relevant to urge the retort that the second amounts to the suggestion that a sufficient number of vouchers can normally be equated with an additional cheque. But one should have thought the doctrine, as it seems to follow from the premises, sufficiently paradoxical to have roused a suspicion in the author's mind that there might possibly be something wrong. The problem here raised as to the principle of moral judgment in a case in which life is bereft of all significance save as a source of pleasure or pain is surely one of those "hypothetical and abstract questions which postulate a human nature different from anything we know," against which Dr. Rashdall knows on occasion how to protest. What enables him to raise it is that he has failed to grasp the principle for which idealism has always stood, that our judgments of "good" as distinct from pleasure always carry along with them a reference to a whole of human nature from which we cannot abstract without ceasing to be rational. For a thoroughgoing Hedonist, it is of course possible to maintain that the conception of our lives as a series of pleasant senses can supply the needed basis of distinction between "good" and pleasant, but I do not understand Dr. Rashdall's concession in favor of the possibility of a "sum of pleasure" to be meant to be taken in this sense. If it were, he would have proved more than he intended and armed his utilitarian opponents with an argument whose edge he would find it difficult to turn.

3. The problem of the relation of the individual to society brings out still more clearly the distance that separates Dr. Rashdall from a thoroughgoing idealism. Nothing indeed could be better than the treatment which it more than once receives where he is handling concrete questions. It is when he comes to the theoretical statement of it in its abstract form, as he does

in II, p. 68, that the difference emerges. He there argues against Bradley's proposition "others are involved in my essence" that "these experiences of a soul may be *like* those of another soul; they may be caused by and dependent upon the experiences of another soul. But the experiences of one soul cannot be or become identical with the experiences of another soul: The content of two consciousnesses may be the same—the universal abstracted from the particular—but not the reality; neither therefore can the good of one soul or self be the good of another, or be included in it or be a part of the good of another." No, truly, if identity means numerical sameness and if reality and content, the particular and the universal, are to be cut asunder. But neither on this showing could any soul be the same as *itself*, and the argument would prove as fatal to the author's own philosophy as to that which he is attacking. It seems hardly necessary to say that the doctrine of identity which idealism has taught from the time of Plato is the precise opposite. As the depth of the individual intelligence depends on the extent to which its perceptions and images reflect an intelligible world which is common (I fail to see what other word we can use), so the individual will finds its truth (why not reality?) just in so far as its particular purposes reflect the meaning of the moral world which is common to itself with other wills. It is likely enough that this doctrine is inadequately expressed by the formula of self-realization through this, I take it, is a translation of Aristotle's *ἐνέργεια*, which Dr. Rashdall seems to approve. It is further possible that the ultimate identity of individual and social good will have to submit to a more fiery trial of criticism than it has hitherto had to bear. But it can have nothing to fear from attacks based on a conception of identity which it may be said to exist to repudiate. Dr. Rashdall's failure to understand its teaching on this head is, I believe, the central defect of his book and will, if I mistake not, undermine its usefulness as a contribution to the philosophy of this part of the subject. I cannot believe that in so open-minded a writer it is irremediable. To remedy it will involve the recasting of considerable portions of its underlying structure, while leaving what is at present its main merit, the suggestive concrete discussion of particular subjects and its common sense treatment of extreme views, untouched.